Supply of sub-standard provisions at high rates to Jawans in Sri Lanka

*207. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:
SHRI DIPEN GHOSH:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Jawans are being supplied with sub-standard provisions at high rates especially in Sri Lanka;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) what are the findings of Brigadier J. Sen's Inquiry into the matter;

(d) whether anybody has been booked for the offence; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (DR. RAJA RAMANNA): (a) to (e) Supply of rations to troops falls under two broad categories—dry supplies and fresh supplies. Dry supplies such as rice, sugar, tea, etc. are procured centrally by the Ministry of Defence (Army Purchase Organisation). Elaborate procedures have been laid down for quality assurance. The items purchased are as per laid down specifications and are tested by the Defence laboratories before they are despatched to the respective depots, for distribution. Periodic sampling is also carried out.

Fresh supplies such as vegetables, fruit, meat, etc. are procured through local contracts, on station basis, by the competent financial authorities. These purchases are also governed by the laid down specifications. Item are inspected and passed by Commanding Officers of Supply Depots and then issued to troops. Should there be a dispute regarding the quality of rations, the matter is referred to the local Station Commander whose decision is final.

To ensure that good quality rations are issued to the troops, visiting officers also carry out surprise checks and get a feed-back from troops. According to the feed-back received from units and formations in IPKF, the quality of rations issued to the troops had been quite satisfactory.

In exceptional circumstances, due to operational necessities when the procurement of either the centrally purchased items or the locally procured items gets disrupted, provision exists for carrying out local purchase on day-to-day basis and in exceptional circumstances upto 15 days at a time. For local purchase as well, detailed instructions have been laid down giving the guidelines for such purchases to ensure quality control as well as reasonable prices. Such local purchases are to be made from Canteen Stores Department, Public Sector Undertakings or the cooperative sector. Only when items are not available from these sources, local purchase ex private trade can be resorted to. Instructions also provide for quality check of these items by Defence laboratories in case the procurement is not for immediate consumption.

Based on some complaints regarding irregularities in the local purchase certain items for the IPKF, the local Formation HQrs had ordered a Court of Inquiry which found the following main lapses:—

(i) proper pre-verification of the suppliers and dealers had not been carried out.

(ii) the item purchased had not been got tested for quality assurance by Defence laboratories; and

(iii) purchases had been split to bring them within the financial powers of the lower executive officers.

The Court of Inquiry recommended that there was justification for further investigation. Accordingly, a second Court of Inquiry presided over by a Lt. Gen. to investigate into the circumstances under which irregularities were committed in carrying out local purchase of ASC supply items during the period July 1987 to March 1988, was ordered by HQ Southern Command.

Based on the Court of Inquiry findings, the Chief of Army Staff has directed initiation of disciplinary action against 3 officers. A General Court Martial is in progress against one officer. In case of the other two officers, summary of evidence proceedings have been initiated.

The affected officers have since filed writ petitions in the courts. These are pending disposal.

Amount spent on Project Tiger

*208. SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what was the amount spent on Project Tiger during 1988, 1989 and in 1990 so far; and

(b) what are the details of the results achieved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRIMATI MANEKA GANDHI): (a) The amount spent by the Central Government during the three years on Project Tiger Scheme is as stated below:

Year	Account (Rs. in Lakhs)
1987-88	262.399
1988-89	379.060
1989-90	467.000

(b) The results achieved are as below:

(i) 28017 Sq. Kms of forests forming tiger habitat is being preserved in 18 Tiger Reserves located within 13 States.

(ii) 12634 Sq. Kms out of the total Project Tiger area has been constituted as core area. All existing wild animal species along with tiger are strictly protected against all types of biotic pressures in the core areas. Activities like grazing, forestry operations have been strictly banned inside the core areas.

(iii) Tourism is also regulated in the Tiger Reserves and maximum attention is paid to the preservation of the habitat in its natural form.

(iv) All Project Tiger areas are strictly protected against fires, poaching and illicit felling.

(v) 43 villages located inside the core areas have been relocated outside the core in a phased manner so that the man animal conflict is eliminated. This has resulted in the reduction of cases of man-eating and cattle lifting by tigers. Relocated villages are being rehabilitated in an ideal manner to the satisfaction of the people concerned.

(vi) Soil conservation measures have been implemented as a part of Project Tiger. This has increased water discharge with reduced silt load in the water courses through the tiger reserves.

(vii) The Tiger Reserves have now become the least disturbed gene-pools of biological diversity in the country.

(viii) Eco-development programme has been launched during 1989-90 in Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. It aims at solving the problems of people living in and around the buffer areas. It is now proposed to extend this programme in the remaining Project Tiger areas in VIII Five Year Plan.

Privatisation of higher education

*209. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI N. E. BALARAM:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal for privatisation of higher education in the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF